



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Airpower Summary: 11 – 17 Dec 2011** **Joint STARS keeps watch as nearly nine-year war ends**

SOUTHWEST ASIA -- "That's incredible," 1st Lt. Carter Matherly, an air weapons officer from the 7th Expeditionary Airborne Command and Control Squadron, said to himself as fellow aircrew members gathered around his screen to watch live video feed of the last U.S. combat forces convoy roll out of Iraq and the gates close behind it.

The aircrew were onboard the last E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, or Joint STARS, sortie to fly over Iraqi airspace. Their mission was to provide surveillance and acquisition radar command and control capabilities to ground forces on the last convoy.

"It's a good feeling to watch those last convoys roll out, it's a historic occasion," said Lt. Col. Curtis Bass, 7th EACCS commander and native of Meridian, Miss. "We were able to cover and support from the air, the last boots on the ground going across the border, bringing a close to a nearly nine-year war in Iraq."

The 11-and-a-half-hour flight departed well into the night with more than 20 aircrew members from the 7th EACCS, comprised of Airmen and Soldiers deployed from the 116th Air Control Wing, 461st Air Control Wing and the 138th Military Intelligence Company all out of Robins Air Force Base, Ga., and one Airman from Fort Hood, Texas, uncommon to a Joint STARS' aircrew.

Tech. Sgt. Eric Rideaux, a joint terminal attack controller and a native of Appaloosa, La., was on the Joint STARS to provide detailed coordination in close proximity to friendly forces. Rideaux was not only part of this historic crew, he was also the last U.S. Air Force JTAC in Iraq.

"It's an honor to be the last JTAC in country. There are a lot of guys that did a lot of hard work out there," said Rideaux, who has spent his fair share of time in Iraq as well, carrying out countless missions. "I'm honestly happy to see that it's finally come to an end; it's been a long time. I'm also glad that I had the opportunity to fly with the JSTARS because it's not something many JTACs can say that they had that opportunity to do..."

The 7th EACCS has more than 50,000 flying hours over Iraq and although this mission marked the last, the proud members of the 7th EACCS are prepared to keep executing their mission no matter where they are.

"We've been here since the beginning," said Bass. "We flew the first night into Iraq, we flew on the last night out and we're not going anywhere - we'll continue to be prepared for anything."

To read the full story and for more photos, visit <http://www.afcent.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123284030>



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jerry Pierson, a Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) flight engineer from the 7th Expeditionary Air Combat Command Squadron, conducts in-flight operations as he and his fellow aircrew escorts the last ground convoy out of Iraq Dec. 18, 2011 during the last combat mission over Iraqi air space. The JSTARS provided airborne, stand-off range, surveillance and target acquisition radar and command and control capabilities to ground personnel. Pierson is from Sturgis, Ky. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. DeNoris A. Mickle)

The Combined Forces Air Component Commander's airpower data for the week of 11 – 17 Dec 2011:

### Airpower Summary for the week of 11-17 Dec 2011

Close Air Support	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
Operation Enduring Freedom	58	60	61	58	60	55	50	402
Operation New Dawn	19	18	13	20	20	20	20	130
Weapons Releases								
OEF	8	1	3	2	4	4	2	24
OND	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ISR								
OEF	93	98	98	91	95	91	91	657
OND	20	23	21	25	22	17	20	148
Combined Data								
Airlift Sorties	155	152	121	126	163	150	138	1,005
Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)	538	874	612	636	755	596	569	4,580
Airlift Passengers	2,730	2,881	3,096	2,285	3,616	3,998	4,024	22,630
Tanker Sorties	43	43	44	44	46	43	41	304
Fuel Offloaded (Thousands of Pounds)	2,999	2,802	2,839	2,634	3,002	2,761	2,733	19,770
Aircraft Refueled	207	216	200	202	229	203	175	1,432
PR/Medevac Sorties	6	19	14	6	18	13	9	85
Saves	1	8	3	0	6	2	1	21
Assist	0	1	4	1	1	9	2	18

(To see the complete CFACC Airpower Statistics, current as of November 30, 2011, please visit:  
<http://www.afcent.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-111205-001.pdf>)

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